

**AGENDA ITEM VII**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON A CONDITIONALLY APPROVED PROGRAM**

**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**M.A. IN HERITAGE RESOURCES**

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#### **M.A. IN HERITAGE RESOURCES**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

##### **Program Approval**

At its meeting of August, 2003, the Board of Regents acted as follows:

**Conditional approval is granted for the proposed M.A. in Heritage Resources program (CIP 30.1202) at Northwestern State University. The implementation date of the program shall be decided after receipt of a progress report to be due June 1, 2004, documenting efforts of the University to address outstanding concerns. Additional progress reports may be required thereafter.**

Specifically, the staff summary for this proposal included the following list of items to be addressed in subsequent progress reports and a broad timeline for accomplishing them:

<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Activity</u>
2003-2004	1. Re-evaluate and revise the proposed curriculum 2. Design a student recruitment plan 3. Survey library resources and identify needed additions
2004-2005	4. Design new entrance requirements
2003-05	5. Hire three faculty at the associate level for this program

##### **First Progress Report**

Subsequently, at its meeting in June 2004, the Regents considered the first progress report from the University. The Regents concluded that the University was making significant progress toward addressing most external consultants' concerns, yet, more definitive responses were still needed with regard to faculty and student recruitment efforts, student admission requirements, student financial assistance, needed library resources, and external cooperative agreements. Accordingly, an additional progress report was required as follows:

**The Board of Regents receives the AY 2003-2004 Progress Report from Northwestern State University Relative to Implementation of the M.A. Program in Heritage Resources. Given the current rate of progress toward meeting Regents' requirements, it is reasonable to project program implementation by Fall 2005. However, as a few problematic issues remain unresolved, an additional progress report shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Higher Education by June 1, 2005.**

### **Second Progress Report and Request for Fall, 2005 Student Admission**

On March 7, 2005, the staff received a copy of the University's second progress report. Shortly thereafter, the University verbally requested authority to admit students into the program in time for admission in Fall 2005. The University strongly emphasized that an answer was needed quickly as prospective students needed a definitive response immediately. Since this item was not scheduled to be considered until the May Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting, the staff agreed to conduct an expedited review to determine whether sufficient progress had been made to justify such authority. On April 5, 2005, Mr. Killebrew informed the University that it could admit eligible students into the program, subject to confirmation of his judgment by subsequent action of the Regents.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The AY 2004-2005 Progress Report indicates the following accomplishments:

1. Faculty Recruitment

Three new faculty have been hired to staff the program, including: August 2002 - 1 assistant professor of History and 1 assistant professor of Cultural Geography; and 1 associate professor of Historic Preservation and program coordinator. Two senior-level History faculty are scheduled to retire soon and the University will then consider associate-level replacements who can contribute to the program.

2. Student Recruitment

An aggressive student recruitment plan was implemented in Fall 2004. These efforts have been very successful, attracting prospective students from across the nation. Students awaiting admission hail from Louisiana, West Virginia, Arizona, Tennessee, Kansas, and Georgia.

3. Student Admission Requirements

A selective admissions process requiring evidence of appropriate levels of student academic achievement has been approved and implemented.

4. Student Financial Assistance

The University has committed to six \$10K graduate assistantships for Fall 2005 and another six for Fall 2006.

5. Library Resources

The University will spend \$8,400 for new library acquisitions to serve the program during AY 2004-2005. Another \$5,000/year will be dedicated for similar enhancements in subsequent years.

6. External Cooperative Agreements

The University has expanded existing external agreements with appropriate federal/state agencies to include student internships. The University has also entered into new agreements with the Natchitoches Historical Foundation, the Louisiana Office of State Parks, the Association for Preservation of Historic Natchitoches, the Historic Landmarks Commission, and the Natchitoches Main Street Project.

### **STAFF SUMMARY**

It is clear to the staff that the University has fully embraced the recommendations of external consultants for needed program enhancements. While the amount of required new resources is sometimes less than consultants indicated, these reductions are not so critical as to delay further the implementation of the program. The staff therefore recommends acceptance of the report and authorization of a Fall 2005 implementation date. A final progress report should be required two years hence to ensure the University commitments have been sustained.

### ***STAFF RECOMMENDATION***

***The Board of Regents receives the AY 2004-2005 Progress Report from Northwestern State University Relative to Implementation of the M.A. Program in Heritage Resources. Based on the contents of this and a previous progress report, the University is hereby authorized to admit students for the Fall 2005 semester. To ensure a continuing level of University commitment, an additional progress report shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Higher Education by June 1, 2007.***